

REMARKS

The above amendments to the above-captioned application along with the following remarks are being submitted as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated May 9, 2008. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to give due reconsideration to this application, to indicate the allowability of the claims, and to pass this case to issue.

Status of the Claims

As outlined above, claims 3-5 stand for consideration in this application, wherein claims 1-2 are being canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, while claims 3-4 are being amended. All amendments to the application are fully supported therein. Applicants hereby submit that no new matter is being introduced into the application through the submission of this response.

Prior Art Rejections

Claims 1-2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Kawaraguchi (JP 2002-16719). Claim 1 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Mizutani et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,405,695). Claims 1-2 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Takahashi et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,758,178).

As mentioned above, claims 1-2 are being cancelled, and therefore, the rejections against claims 1-2 are moot. Accordingly, withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for holding that claims 4-5 are allowed. Applicants further thank the Examiner for holding that claim 3 would be allowed if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

As set forth above, claim 3 is being amended so as to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, allowance of claims 3-5 are respectfully solicited.

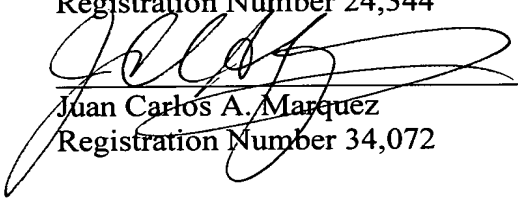
Conclusion

In light of the Amendments and Remarks, Applicants respectfully request early and favorable action with regard to the present application, and a Notice of Allowance for all pending claims is earnestly solicited.

Favorable reconsideration of this application as amended is respectfully solicited. Should there be any outstanding issues requiring discussion that would further the prosecution and allowance of the above-captioned application, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the address and phone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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